

Agenda item:	11
Attachment:	A

HRA Board Cover sheet

19 January 2022

Title of paper:	9 November 2021 HRA Audit & Risk Committee meeting summary
Submitted by:	Steve Tebbutt
Summary of paper:	To provide a brief summary of the matters discussed at the last HRA Audit & Risk Committee meeting.
Reason for submission:	For information
Further information:	See summary update
Dissemination:	Published on HRA website
Time required:	5 minutes

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Summary

Key Summary points of the Health Research Authority (HRA) Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 9 November 2021.

Committee governance:

- Quorate (5 of 5 members in attendance)
- Appointment of new independent member taking quorum to 5.

Key business conducted

Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) Audit Committee Chairs' event

- Richard Cooper provided feedback on a recent Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) half day event he had attended. Richard highlighted the topics of discussion included:
 - A white paper re internal audit.
 - The importance of explaining assumptions better within the Annual Report/Statement of Accounts
 - The importance of a resilience statement
 - Considerations relating to climate change for organisations
 - Top risks for organisations relating to:
 - Recovery from COVID-19
 - How to move to Net zero
 - Wellbeing and diversity
 - Technology
 - Property/estates

System wide risks

- Christine Holmes, from the HRA's Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) Sponsor Team, attended the meeting to discuss risks affecting the wider research sector and the areas of concern for the Science, Research and Evidence Directorate of DHSC.
- The Committee discussed the potential impact any disproportionality of HRA Approval could have on the future competitiveness of the UK, the importance of financial and human resources to deliver the research systems programme and issues relating to the impact of climate change.
- Christine congratulated the HRA on how well the organisation had moved to home working and undertaken ethical reviews remotely during the pandemic. Christine further congratulated the HRA in relation to the successful 'Make it Public' conference which took place in November.

Strategic risk register

- The Committee discussed and approved the draft version of the refreshed strategic risk register, noting the earlier work undertaken by the Executive Committee and Audit & Risk Committee to identify and analysis potential risks.
- The Committee noted a discussion regarding risk appetite would take place at the next meeting.

Deep dive into complaints / third party complaints, whistleblowing, raising concerns

- Susannah Keeling, HRA Information Governance and Complaints Manager attended the meeting to deliver a presentation which focused on the number and type of complaints received by the HRA and how these are handled.
- The Committee noted the increase in third party complaints received by the HRA in recent years and discussed specific complaints in more detail.
- The Committee was pleased to note the introduction of the Complaints Management Group one year ago now gave the HRA greater oversight and understanding of potential complaints and media enquiries and was further assured to learn the HRA, together with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Human Tissue Association (HTA) and the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) are part of a knowledge sharing and best practice group.

HRA HGIAS audit plan 2021/22

- The Committee received and noted the GIAA ARC progress report which provided a progress summary of the HRA audit plan. The Committee noted the new Quarter 4 audit, HRA User Feedback, has been added to the plan and replaces the previously deferred audit.

Assurance dashboard

- The Committee received and noted the Assurance Dashboard which provided an overview of open GIAA audits and HRA assurance reviews.
- The Committee was pleased to note information regarding REC meeting observations and the Shared Ethical Debate report had been included in the dashboard

External Audit – early reflections on audit risks

- The Committee noted the National Audit Office (NAO)/KPMG early reflections on audit risks report for information.
- The Committee noted IFRS 16 is expected to be introduced from 1 April 2022 and, whilst it will not directly impact the financial statements for 2021-22, the HRA will be required to disclose the expected impact of the new standard in its accounting policies.